

From: [Katrina Miller](#)
To: [Community Development and Recreation Committee](#)
Subject: submsions for CDRC
Date: Friday, November 17, 2017 4:15:17 PM
Attachments: [Local 79 Council Briefing - Nov 2017 -CD24.3- Community Recreation 2018-2020 Growth Plan and Waitlist Management.pdf](#)
[Local 79 Council Briefing - Nov 2017 - CD24.7 2018 Shelter Infrastructure Plan and Progress Report.pdf](#)

Dear Carol,

Please accept the attached submissions for items CD24.3 and CD24.7. Thanks in advance.

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Council Briefing Note

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CD24.3: COMMUNITY RECREATION 2018-2020 GROWTH PLAN AND WAITLIST MANAGEMENT

Summary

The report before Committee shows that waitlists for recreation programs have grown by 74% over the last three years to 198,236. A previous staff report states that if nothing is done the waitlist will grow to 400,000 by 2025. Local 79 is relieved to see that the report recommends adding 60,000 new spaces in programs over the next three years in existing facilities. However, only 10,000 spaces are recommended for 2018.

The proposed Growth Plan is a very helpful step to stemming further waitlist growth. Yet, expansion efforts are focused on “primary programming”, largely introductory classes with a high number of participants. There is some concern that this could inadvertently come at the detriment of locally customized programming or programs geared towards equity-seeking communities and vulnerable populations.

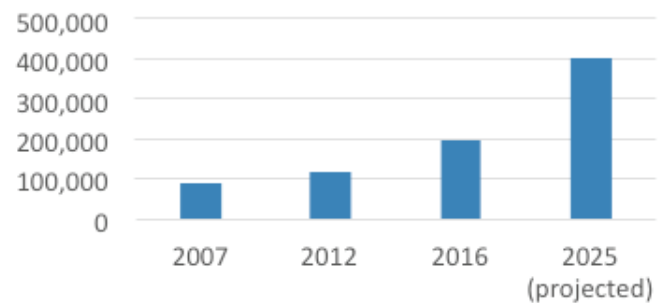
Lastly, the report recommends reporting waitlists based only on unique clients compared to the number of those clients who are already successfully registered for at least one program. Continuing to monitor the overall waitlist size is essential to understanding the unmet need and demand for City recreation services.

Recommendations

Local 79 respectfully recommends that the Committee:

- Direct staff to report back through the 2018 budget process on the maximum number of program spaces that can be created in existing facilities in 2018 and the associated cost, with a breakdown of the types of programs that would be expanded.
- Direct staff to report back on measures taken to ensure that the Growth Plan does not result in the reduction of locally customized programming or programs serving equity-seeking communities and vulnerable populations.
- Direct staff to continue monitoring and reporting overall waitlist size as part of the performance indicators for the Growth Plan.

**RECREATION REGISTERED PROGRAM WAITLISTS
2007-2025**



Discussion

The report, “Community Recreation 2018-2020 Growth Plan and Waitlist Management” makes clear once again that Toronto’s recreation services are falling further and further behind community need. This can be demonstrated by waitlists that have grown 74% over three years to 198,236 in 2016, and can be expected to grow to 400,000 by 2025 if nothing is done.

The quality of our recreational services is also at stake. Consider the fact that although use of recreation facilities has grown by 17% since 2012, staffing to support users and provide programming has basically flat-lined.

The report points out that most of the growth in use has been in leisure and drop-in services. While waitlists for registered programs have exploded, the number of program spaces has only expanded by 4.2%. The 2017 budget made the situation worse. 111 front-line staff positions that could have been filled with instructors to provide programs were instead eliminated.

The City Staff report puts forward a plan to add 60,000 new spaces in programs over the next three years in existing facilities in order to stem the waitlist growth, but an expansion of only 10,000 is recommended for 2018. The Recreation Facilities Master Plan will also do much to create expanded service over the next twenty years. But neither of these plans will expand service fast enough to address the needs of the current generation of kids, youth and seniors who make up the majority of the waitlist.

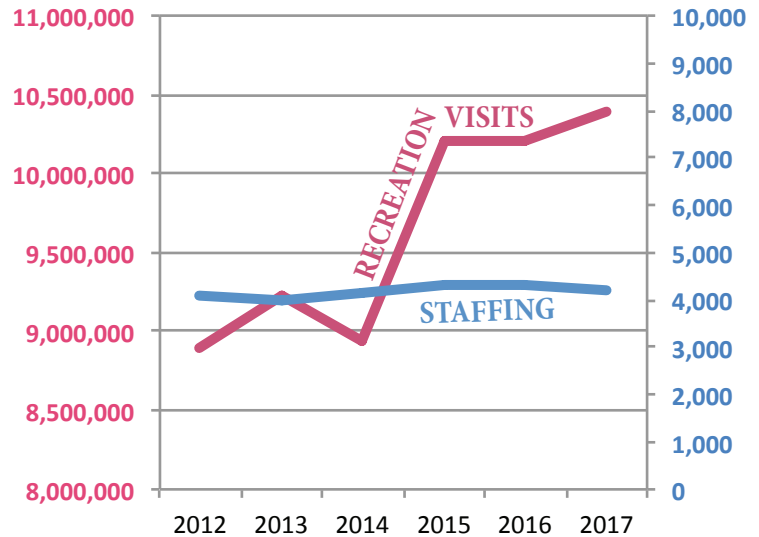
Toronto should create as many program spaces as possible in 2018 in existing facilities and accelerate implementation of the Recreation Facilities Master Plan.

The Growth Plan puts much weight in expanding “primary programs”, which are generally introductory classes with a large number of participants. Yet ensuring that there are programs to fit the varying and diverse needs of Toronto’s communities is also a critical goal of the Recreation Service Plan.

Just last month, CDRC reviewed findings of the Newcomer Youth Recreation Forum, which concluded that the City should improve access to recreation for this population through more responsive programming. The ability to locally co-design programs with youth is an essential part of effectively serving this population.

It can also be important to sustain certain lower-volume programs that serve equity seeking or

**VISITS VS. STAFFING AT PF&R
2012-2017**



vulnerable populations. One of the frontline staff Local 79 interviewed as part of the Forum lamented the Division's routine of cancelling programs with low attendance as little regard is given to who those programs are serving, or whether attendance will improve given time. In her case, programs serving newcomer youth identifying as women have been cancelled, even as the worker was recruiting greater attendance.

Measures must be taken to ensure that the Growth Plan and its focus on "primary programming" does not result in the reduction of locally customized programming or programs serving equity-seeking communities and vulnerable populations.

The report provides a useful breakdown of the overall waitlist number to identify the number of unique clients on the waitlist, as well as the number of waitlisted clients who have been able to successfully register for at least one program, even as they wait for others. Monitoring the overall waitlist size continues to be an important indicator and recognition that different individuals and families will have differing levels of need for recreation services that should be supported by an inclusive system that seeks to nurture social equity.

It is critical that the City continue monitoring and reporting overall waitlist size as part of the performance indicators for the Growth Plan in order to properly assess and address need and demand for recreation services.

Conclusion

Accessible and affordable public recreation is a key driver of health, community development, and equity in our City. Many studies have shown that investing in community recreation realizes sizable returns in terms of reduced use of other more costly public services such as healthcare, social services and law enforcement. The Growth Plan and the Facilities Master Plan previously put forward by staff provide helpful road maps to meeting Toronto's community recreation needs, and action on both should be accelerated.

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